DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 277 968 CG 019 650

AUTHOR Baruch, Rhoda; Stutman, Suzanne
TITLE Episodes of Anger on Prime Time Television: A Content Analysis.
INSTITUTION Institute for Mental Health Initiatives, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 17 Jan 86
NOTE 45p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the World Association for Infant Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines (3rd, Stockholm, Sweden, August 3-7, 1986). For related document, see CG 019 649.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Affective Behavior; *Anger; *Characterization; *Emotional Response; *Popular Culture; *Programing (Broadcast); *Role Models; Television; Television Research; Television Viewing

ABSTRACT

Although anger is associated with risk of coronary heart disease, failed marriages, and suicide, angry exchanges are not always negative experiences but can be beneficial. Recently experts on anger concluded that television could portray anger constructively by using television characters who listened to the angry person, integrated anger and love, remained open to the other person's feelings, refrained from violence, and engaged in problem solving. This study examined 15 of the most popular commercial television programs appearing in March and April 1985. These programs represented a wide spectrum of tastes, all three networks, and the top production companies. Program types were adventure, prime time dramas, situation comedies, and detective stories. A total of 194 anger episodes in the 15 programs were analyzed using a content scoring instrument containing 56 items describing the presence or absence of certain characteristics of the angry person and of the target of anger. Skills found to be well illustrated included listening to the angry person, showing respect, remaining in tune with own feelings, and accurately hearing the angry person. Angry characters directed anger toward an object, displayed appropriate anger, and explained the cause of anger coherently. Analysis showed expressions of anger by television characters did not inevitably lead to abuse and violence, but sometimes even modeled anger management with positive outcomes. Television has an opportunity to portray a greater variety of positive anger responses. References and eight data tables are appended. (ABL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED277968

Dedicated to Promoting
Mental Health

EPISODES OF ANGER ON PRIME TIME TELEVISION:

A CONTENT ANALYSIS

Rhoda Baruch, Ed.D.

Suzanne Stutman, M.A., M.S.W.

JANUARY 17, 1986

INSTITUTE FOR MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES
4545 42ND STREET, N.W.
SUITE 312
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016

CG 019650

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Suzanne Stutman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INTRODUCTION

Among many risks that are associated with anger and chronic hostility are coronary heart disease, hypertension, psychopathology and violence (Pierce,1984; Speilberger and London, 1982; Barefoot et al,1983; Manuck et al, in press). Unresolved hostility can be a factor in failed marriages (Beck, 1984) and careers. Moreover, suicide and homicide are sometimes the extreme expression of anger (Pierce, 1984). Suppressed anger incurs other risks as well; it deadens responsiveness, inhibits work effectiveness and productivity, and constricts creative endeavors (Bernardez, 1984).

However, contrary to general public belief that angry exchanges are uniformly negative experiences, conflict and anger, frequent occurrences in family living and other interpersonal relationships (Patterson, 1982, Jackson, 1984), can be perceived by both the angry person and the target to be beneficial under appropriate circumstances (Averill, 1982). Anger can provide an opportunity to make a grievance known, solve problems, correct an imbalance of power in a relationship and restore pride that has been reduced. (Miller,1983; Beck 1979; Pierce,1984; Novaco,in press; Inclan,1984; Jackson, 1984). It contains the potential energy to effect change (Sparks, 1984). The reward

for the constructive expression and interchange of anger can be an improved emotional connection between people, a maintained sense of integrity and a safer feeling (Miller, Averill, Tavris, 1984). Research has shown that whether the experience of anger is constructive or not depends on the use of specific skills.

Consultation on Anger and Portrayal in the Media

When a group of experts on the subject of anger discussed its risks, benefits, and the implications that effective anger management has for the promoton of mental health, their conclusions (IMHI,1984) were summarized as follows:

> Television can portray anger to show viewers how to express anger constructively and what to avoid when anger is triggered. Ideas from research and clinical practice can be exemplified by television characters who sometimes:

KEEP CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION OPEN WHEN THEY:

* Listen to the angry person and accurately hear what is said.
* Integrate anger with loving feelings.
* Respect the other person while expressing anger.
* Avoid turning anger into an attack.
* Remain open to the other person's feelings and point of view.
* Express anger that is specific and directed to an object, theme or behavior rather than to a personality.

MANAGE THEIR OWN ANGER WHEN THEY:

* Alter their own expectations and appraisals, using humor and having the ability to laugh at themselves.
* Use self-instruction.
* Do not resort to violence or anti-social acts.
* Become assertive
* Recognize when anger is a way of avoiding or defending against other painful emotions.
* Monitor their somatic signs until they gain control of their angry impulses, perhaps by counting to ten or calling "time out."
* Avoid ruminating on provoking events.
* Express anger without sexist or racist overtones.
* Separate past from present feelings.
* Engage in problem solving and plan a strategy to reach a solution.
* Show how their anger subsides when the goal has been reached and anger is resolved.

REACT WITH SKILL TO THE ANGER OF OTHERS WHEN THEY:

* Defuse a situation by anticipating the anger of another person, offering an explanation of the circumstances before the other's anger is provoked and escalates.
* Provide distraction or pleasing messages to a very angry person, thus reducing the angry response.
* Teach children words to describe feelings as soon as they learn to talk.
* Help children become aware of themselves as separate human beings with their own thoughts and feelings.
* Teach children empathy by sharing their own feelings.
* Are sensitive to cultural differences in what angers people and how they react.

RESORT TO VIOLENCE AS A TOOL ONLY IF THEY ARE WEAK AND INEFFECTUAL VILLIANS.

The above list represents a compilation of skills that when used within an angry exchange can provide for a more potentially constructive outcome. The expression of anger can be managed by using these skills and relationships can be improved. Television can provide

to the viewing audiences characters who model positive anger management skills within the dramatic format. Individuals can learn how to use these skills by watching television and then imitating the behaviors.

Research suggests that television characters can serve as models or objects of identification, and as such are able to influence behavior (Bandura, 1983; Swift, 1984; Pearl et al., 1982; Dorr, 1982; Collins, 1985). To the extent that TV characters exemplify different ways to express anger constructively, the coping capabilities of viewers may be enhanced. Television viewers, tuning in prime time programs for their entertainment and shedding the responsilities of the day, can thus reap a secondary benefit from their viewing.

THE PROBLEM

How is anger currently being portrayed by popular television characters? To what extent do the skills and behaviors identified above appear in the repertoire of TV folk heroes and heroines? Is the expression of anger handled differently by women TV characters? Are there racist or sexist overtones to the expression of anger? Is the expression of anger handled differently by black TV characters? How much verbal and physical abuse accompanies the expression of anger? What is the

outcome when anger is expressed in a constructive fashion? In short, what do TV characters do when they get angry?

If we are to build a bridge between media and mental health, influencing the incorporation of wholesome anger management techniques into television dramatizations, what is the baseline from which we start?

With this in mind, IMHI developed and performed a content analysis of the way anger was portrayed by characters on prime time television shows.

THE SAMPLE

The programs that were selected and taped for our content analysis of anger episodes appeared on commercial television during March and April of 1985. Programs were choosen to obtain:

1. a reach of a very large viewing audience,
2. a wide spectrum of tastes among the diversified American viewing audience,
3. representation from all three networks, and
4. representation from the top production companies.

The Neilsen ratings for the month of February, 1985 were examined to determine which prime time programs had the largest viewing audience. Six of the 7 most viewed programs were selected. Altogether 15 programs were selected; 3 programs were selected from ABC, 5 from CBS and 7 from NBC. Representation from most of the leading production companies was achieved.

To achieve wide variety in content as well as audience, four types of programs were used for the sample: Adventure, prime time dramas (soaps), situation comedies (sitcoms) and detective stories.

Episodes from 6 detective programs, 5 sitcoms, 3 prime time dramas and 1 adventure program were analyzed. A total of 194 anger episodes of these 15 programs were analyzed. In many programs more than one episode of anger was found in a program segment as broadcast in one evening. (Chart #1 attached)

METHOD

The content analysis scoring instrument contained 56 items describing the presence or absence of certain characteristics of the angry person and of the target of anger. The instrument also called for the identification of specific anger management skills by the characters. These skills were derived from the list given above.

The personal characteristics to be tracked included sex, race, adult or child status, as well as whether the character expressing the anger was "powerful", "likeable" or a "drug user." The use of anger management skills were identified by the analyst answering questions such as:

* Did the target show empathy for the angry person?
* Was the angry person able to find humor in the situtation?
* Did the angry person show respect for the target?
* Did the characters engage in problem solving and try to reach a solution?

At least four different segments of each program were taped and viewed. The length of each segment lasted either a half hour or one hour depending on the type of program. Each episode of anger that appeared on each segment was analyzed by trained college students. (1) Interjudge agreement was 92%. The unit of analysis was then one episode of anger and findings are based on 194 such episodes.

(1) The content analysis was done with the help of four student interns. Ray Koziol, Marquette University, Meredith Olshan, Mount Vernon College, Merry Ross, George Washington University and Lisa Efron, Columbia University. The content analysis questionnaire is available through the Institute for Mental Health Initiatives (IMHI).

RESULTS

Sex Stereotyping and Anger

Miller and others have noted that women in our society face special obstacles leading to the inhibition of expression of anger. How do women TV characters handle the expression of anger?

In the scenes from the selected episodes men outnumber women about three-to-one both in depicting angry characters and as targets of anger. However, our sample included over forty episodes portraying women expressing anger. Comparing men and women, with only one exception, we found no significant differences in the way anger was handled by the sexes. Thus, although occurring less frequently, women viewers can find many role models (both positive and negative) for expressing anger in prime time television. (2)

(2) (The one exception where the sexes differ involves the expression of anger with sexist or racist overtones. There were only five such examples, yet it was the women who used sexist expressions of anger more frequently, outnumbering men four to one. Sex stereotyping was not evident in reactions to anger such as experiencing guilt with anger expression or turning anger against oneself. In all other comparisons, including skillful management of anger, men and women were proportionally represented with no sex stereotying occurring.)

Racial Stereotyping

Blacks made up 15% of the characters exhibiting anger in the episodes selected and 12% of the targets of anger.

There were few significant differences between the way black characters and others portray anger. In the three comparisons where there were differences, the black characters were depicted more often as more skillful in anger management. When the target was black, he/she was more likely than his white counterpart to hear accurately what the angry person was saying ($P = .05$ chi square = 3.78; d.f. = 1) and was more often open to the point of view of the angry person ($p < .01$; chi square = 7.13; d.f.= 1). Black characters were also less likely to direct anger at a person and instead, direct anger at an object, theme, or behavior ($p<.01$; chi square= 8.52; d.f.=2). These more favorable portrayals of blacks were found in the Cosby, Webster, and Hill Street Blues programs. (TABLE 5 & 6)

How do TV characters react when they are angry?

The frequent occurence of violence on TV has been raised as a controversial issue. How much verbal and physical abuse appears on TV in prime time?

The angry character becomes verbally abusive in almost half the episodes, but this response varies greatly among programs. In Family Ties, Silver Spoons, and Webster, no verbal abusiveness accompanied anger, and in Cosby it was rare (8%). In Newhart and Dynasty such verbal abuse occurred in only a quarter of the anger episodes, whereas in Hardcastle and McCormick it occurred in 82% of the episodes, in Cagney and Lacey 75%, Miami Vice 86%, Remington Steele 70%, the A-Team 69% and Dallas 50%. (3) (TABLE 8)

Physical abusiveness on the part of the angry person is present in less than a fifth of the anger episodes analyzed. However, programs such as Newhart, Cosby, Webster, Silver Spoons, and Family Ties all of which appeal to large prime time audiences without any examples of angry people becoming physically abusive. Physical abusiveness is rare in Dynasty and infrequent in Cagney and Lacey and Dallas. However, in the A-Team, Hotel, Simon and Simon, Miami Vice, Hardcastle and McCormick, and Hill Street Blues, characters move from anger to physical abuse in about a third of the episodes of anger. (TABLE 8).

More often, in about a third of the episodes the angry person appears to the viewer to be violent even if not

acting overtly destructive. The A-Team leads with 87% of its episodes featuring this violent appearance. Again Newhart, Cosby, Silver Spoons, and Family Ties avoided such appearances of violence completely, with Webster, Dynasty and Dallas depicting the angry person only rarely as appearing violent. However such appearances are common in Miami Vice, Simon and Simon, Hotel, Hill Street Blues, and Hardcastle and McCormick. (TABLE 8)

While feelings of guilt associated with the expression of anger are portrayed by television characters in only about five percent of the episodes, 17% of all Hill Street Blues episodes examined showed characters who experience guilt after anger expression, as did Newhart (13%), Dallas (8.3%), and Dynasty (6.3%). (TABLE 8) [3.]

3. The percentages measure the number of times a specific anger management skill is used in the episodes of anger analyzed from the particular program. Thus, in 17% of all the anger episodes appearing in the 4 programs of Hill Street Blues that were analyzed, characters were portrayed expressing guilt.

The expression of anger is complex. Some characters are portrayed displacing it onto other people leading to guilt in some instances, or taking it out on themselves. (TABLE 8) Another expression, "venting" anger on inanimate objects, was observed in 6% of all episodes analyzed. This expression of anger appeared often in Family Ties (67%) and also in the A-Team (31%). Displacement onto inanimate objects is much less frequent in Cagney and Lacey, Newhart, Webster, Hotel, Remington Steele and Hill Street Blues. (TABLE 8)

Anger can be a defense against other painful emotions, and television characters portray this use of anger in more than 35% of the episodes of anger, as judged by our college student viewers. Anger as a defense does not appear much in Silver Spoons and rarely on A-Team or Remington Steele, but frequently on Family Ties (100%), Dynasty (69%), Hotel (44%), and Dallas (42%), Hill Street Blues (42%), and Miami Vice (43%). (TABLE 8)

Use of Skills for Anger Management

Problem Solving

On the whole, characters engage in "problem-solving" and try to reach a solution following an episode of anger relatively rarely, in only 11% or 21 of the 194 anger episodes analyzed. There is, however, great variation among programs in the use of this skill with Family Ties leading with 67% of anger episodes resulting in problem-solving, and Miami Vice second with 43% of its anger episodes showing problem-solving as a follow up of anger. There was no problem-solving depicted in A-Team, Webster or Remington Steele, but Hardcastle and McCormick, Dallas, Cagney and Lacey and Silver Spoons showed characters engaged in problem-solving in about one in four episodes of anger. An important pre-requisite for problem-solving appears to be that the target accurately hears what the angry person is saying. (Table 2)

Problem-solving is associated with a good outcome on television. While the situation often deteriorates after anger expression (43% of the episodes analyzed), such is less likely to occur when characters have engaged in problem solving. When charcaters engage in problem solving after an expression of anger, only 14% of the time does the situation deteriorate as compared to 43%. ($p<.01$; chi square = 8.08; d.f.=1)

Integrating Anger and Love

The ability to express anger while remembering you love the person with whom you are angry, is a complex and difficult skill to incorporate into relationships. In the Television program Webster, the mother becomes angry with her child (Webster) and passionately states, "I don't love what you did Webster but I do love you."

In 15% of the episodes of anger portrayed, feelings of love were integrated with the angry feeling. Family Ties always portrayed anger this way and Webster in half its portrayals; Cosby in 42% of its anger episodes and Newhart in 38%. Surprisingly, Silver Spoons had no such incidents, but adult programs such as Dynasty (31%), Hardcastle and McCormick (18%) and Dallas (17%) all showed anger and love being integrated on occasion. (TABLE 3)

Integrating love with anger was associated with the angry person's finding humor in the situation, although both are relatively rare in prime time portrayals. As our contingency analysis revealed, when the angry person can re-appraise and find humor in the situation, he/she is more likely to integrate love with anger. ($p = .01$; Chi Square = 6.28; d.f. = 1)

As portrayed on TV, a key to effective anger expression is the integration of anger with feelings of love. The situation is almost twice as likely to deteriorate when anger is expressed without love. ($p<.05$; Chi Square = 4.32; d.f. = 1)

Use of Humor

Another important skill in managing anger involves the use of humor, first by the angry person and then by the target, who uses humor to calm the angry person. Such scenes are rare, with no more than 6 % of the total sample of anger episodes analyzed showing this skill. Only Cosby shows an angry person using humor, a technique frequently used in as many as 67% of episodes. By contrast in Hardcastle and McCormick use of the skill was far less frequent, appearing in only 9% of the anger episodes. (TABLE 2)

The use of humor by the target occurs in more of the programs monitored, as Table 4 indicates. Family Ties and Cosby showed the target using humor in a third of their episodes of anger. Hardcastle and McCormick did so in 18%; Webster, Silver Spoons, and Hotel, portrayed the target using humor in more than 10% of their episodes of anger; the A-Team less often (6%).

When humor is used by the target to calm the angry person, improvement in the situation can be expected, whereas without humor, improvement in the situation is not likely. ($p = .001$; chi square= 11.38; d.f.=1).

Thus, more than half of the prime time programs we sampled never showed this skill for the management of anger by the target. Only two of the fifteen programs sampled showed any instances of the angry person finding humor in the situation.

Anger and Coherent Explanations

In real life, we often find ourselves tongue-tied or sputtering when we are angry. An anger management skill portrayed in all the programs in our sample (at least sometimes) is the angry person's ability to give a coherent explanation of what angered him. Programs that more often depict this skill are Newhart (88%), Cosby (82%), Dallas

(83%), Dynasty (81%), Hotel (78%), Cagney and Lacey (75%), Webster (75%), Silver Spoons (75%), Hill Street Blues (71%) and Miami Vice (71%). Coherent explanations are less frequently given by angry persons in A-Team (31%) and Remington Steele (20%) . (TABLE 2)

Two other important anger management skills advocated by Novaco (1984) that are rarely shown on television are use of "self-instruction" and "monitoring somatic symptoms." An example of self-instruction might be, "Oh, there goes Mt. Helen erupting again. I won't let him/her get me again. I'm staying cool, calm and collected."

An example of monitoring somatic symptoms might be. "I can sure feel my heart racing and pounding. And there's that familiar tight feeling in my face muscles. I must be getting angry. I need 'time out' to figure out what it's all about."

These skills appear in less than 2% of the episodes of anger we analyzed. Only Webster, Dallas, and Dynasty showed such monitoring of somatic symptoms. (TABLE 2)

Channels of Open Communication

Keeping channels of communication open during an episode of anger is extremely difficult and requires the use

of a number of subsidiary skills. How often do prime time television characters demonstrate these skills?

One subsidiary skill is "listening." The target listened to the angry person in over 80% of the episodes of anger. Only in Remington Steele (43%) was such listening not present in the majority of instances. Beyond merely listening, there was evidence the target accurately heard what was being said in over 70% of the episodes. Again, only in a few programs, Remington Steele (20%), A-Team (31%), Newhart (38%), and Miami Vice (43%), was such accurate hearing not the norm. (TABLE 4)

Another important requirement to keep channels of communication open during anger is that the target show respect for the angry person. This was depicted in 68% of the episodes. In Cosby and Webster, respect for the angry person was always portrayed, and in most other programs, it was the norm, occuring in two thirds or more of the episodes. Respect for the angry person was less often depicted in Family Ties, Miami Vice and, A-Team. (TABLE 4)

The angry person is depicted showing respect for the target considerably less often (39% overall). The variation among programs is especially great on this skill portrayal, Webster showing it in 100% of its episodes of anger, Cosby

in 75%, Cagney and Lacey, A-Team and Miami Vice less than 15%. (TABLE 2)

The most sophisticated skill involved in communication about anger involves showing empathy for the angry person. This skill was exhibited in almost a quarter of the episodes of anger in the sample with wide variation among program types. The A-Team never shows a target of anger with empathy for the angry person, and in Simon and Simon, Silver Spoons, Cagney and Lacey, and Miami Vice, such empathy is rare. Yet we find Hotel, Webster, Newhart, Family Ties, Hill Street Blues, and Cosby showing examples of empathy for the angry person in more than a quarter of their episodes of anger. (TABLE 4)

When anger is directed at a likeable target, the target is more likely to show empathy ($p < 0001$; chi square = 16.4; d.f.=1). Likeable targets demonstrate this skill on television in 95 % of episodes where empathy is displayed.

Beyond listening, accurately hearing the angry person's grievance is shown in 71% of the anger episodes sampled. Mutual respect between angry person and target appears in 39%, and empathy in 23% of the episodes analyzed.

Another communication skill is a target showing openness to the angry person's point of view. Many more examples of this skill were found than would have been expected, with

37% of the episodes of anger showing such an attitude on the part of the target. It occurs in more than half the episodes in Cosby, Webster, and Newhart . In other programs, Cagney and Lacey and A-Team, there is little or no such openness on the part of the target. (TABLE 4).

Openness on the part of the target to the angry person's point of view is strongly associated with a positive outcome of the anger episode ($p<.001$, chi square = 18.6, d.f.=1).

Analysis shows that the situation improves in 44% of the episodes where the character is open to the angry person's point of view, but improves in only 13.9% of the instances where the target is not open to the point of view.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Overall, the analysis showed that viewers can learn something about keeping channels of communication open from the characters who entertain them on prime time television. In general the skills found to be well illustrated include the target; listening to the angry person, showing respect, remaining in tune with his own feelings, and accurately hearing the angry person. Angry characters on prime time

television were shown separating past feelings from the present, directing anger toward an object, displaying anger appropriate to the cause, and explaining the cause of anger coherently. While often difficult, keeping the channels of communication open during angry interchanges is important for a constructive outcome.

The analysis showed that angry characters on prime time television are three times more likely to be men, but there were no significant differences between men and women in the expression of anger. In addition, there were few significant differences between the way black characters and others portrayed anger except that many of the programs including Cosby, Webster, and Hill Street Blues had a more favorable portrayal of Blacks than Caucasians.

While there were episodes of verbal abuse in some programs over 50% of the time there were also a few programs that showed no verbal abuse related to anger expression. Physical abuse appears in about 20% of the episodes analyzed, and the angry person appears to be violent in about one-third of the episodes. The incidence of physical abuse and violence varied widely across programs with some shows portraying no abuse or violence and others having a high percentage of such scenes.

While we found incidents of physical and verbal abuse related to anger, we also found episodes portraying some of the true to life complexity of anger expression. The analysis revealed characters who at times displaced their anger onto people other than the cause of their anger; characters who experienced guilt after anger expression; characters who took their anger out on themselves or on objects; and characters who used anger as a defense against other emotions.

Although infrequent, some episodes portrayed a connection between anger and somatic symptoms such as headaches.

Anger management skills that are shown, particularly applicable to the family situation include integrating anger with love, parents teaching their children how to express anger, and showing empathy for the other person. It was found that likeable characters showed empathy more often than those less likeable characters.

Although occurring infrequently, many anger management skills were modelled in compelling and creative ways. When the angry person was provided with information about the situation, the anger was averted. When characters engaged in problem solving, the situation improved. Portrayals of anger with love were found, although infrequently, and

portrayals of humor were even more rare. When humor was used to laugh at oneself or the situation, the outcome of the conflict was positive. Clearly an opportunity exists for more scriptwriters to portray anger with humor. Such portrayals can provide, along with entertainment, models of these skills for the management of anger.

Positive outcomes were noted when anger was expressed with love and respect. Separating past angry feelings from those provided in the present situation was shown at least 50% of the time in some shows. There were episodes in which the angry person showed respect for the target of the anger with positive outcomes associated.

Two anger management skills identified by experts, that were rarely found to be present by the analysis, are self-instruction and the monitoring of somatic symptoms. Self-instruction was not found at all. Anger was related to physical symptoms in only a few of the episodes analyzed but the characters did not use the symptoms to change their awareness or response.

In summary, the analysis of the expressions of anger by prime time television characters indicates that on TV anger expression and management does not inevitably lead to abuse and violence and shows some of the complexities of anger expression. In fact, some of the most popular shows on

television are modeling important concepts of anger management with positive outcomes.

There are, however, many skills and techniques that are not being portrayed consistently, for example the use of humor, self-instruction and monitoring of somatic symptoms. An opportunity exists for more varied anger management to be used by writers for entertaining programs that model these skills.

CONCLUSIONS

Anger is an emotion that most people experience several times a day. It carries with it many risks, both to health of an individual and the health of his or her relationships. The skillful handling of anger can lead to improved communication, greater productivity and a healthier life. The content analysis shows that television does provide, in prime time, varied models for skillful management of anger on popular television programs.

TV has a powerful potential to portray anger constructively in a variety of ways and to show viewers what to avoid when anger is triggered. Since it is well documented that television has a tremendous potential to influence viewers the programs that do incorporate constructive skills could not only serve as a model for the viewing audiences but also

be used by physicians, therapists, and teachers, by making use of these examples in discussions of how to handle anger effectively.

Yet an opportunity exists for a far greater variety of anger responses to be depicted. As viewers and consumer advocates become concerned with this feature of program content, television producers and executives can be expected to respond.

Several shows have proven that such skills that promote mental health can be portrayed creatively, maintaining the dramatic or comedic value of the program. Portraying these and other skills represents the challenge of the future in television entertainment.

REFERENCES

Averill, J. Regulating interpersonal relationships using anger. In Final Report, Anger and Its Portrayals in the Media: Implications for Promotion of Mental Health, Consultation on Anger, Queenstown, Md., 1984.

Bandura, A. Aggression: A Social Learning Analysis. Englewood Cliffs, N.Y.: Prentice Hall, 1983.

Beck, A.T. Clinical Significance of Hostility. Paper for IMHI conference on anger, September, 1984.

Bernardez, T. Women and Anger: Conflicts with Aggression in Contemporary Women. Journal of the American Medical Women's Association. 33(5):215-219, 1978.

Chaffee, S.H. Television and adolescent agressiveness. In G.A. Comstock and E.A. Rubinsstein (Eds.), Television and Social Behavior (Vol. 3). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972.

Comstock, G.A. Television and Human Behavior: The Key Studies. Santa Monica, Ca.: Rand Corporation, 1975.

DeFleur, M. Occupational roles as portrayed on television. Public Opinion Quarterly, 1964, 28, 257-274.

Door, A. Television and affective development and functioning. In Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties. Rockville, Md: Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Mental Health, 1982.

Himmelweit, H.T., Oppenheim, A.N., and Vince, P. Television and the Child: An Empirical Study of the Effects of Television on the Young. London: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Inclan, J. Approaching the Hispanic family. In Final Report, Anger and Its Portrayals in the Media: Implications for Promotion of Mental Health, Consultation on Anger, Queenstown, Md., 1984.

Jackson, M. The regulation of the expression of anger in the family. In Final Report, Anger and Its Portrayals in the Media: Implications for Promotion of Mental Health, Consultation on Anger, Queenstown, Md., 1984.

McNally, D.P. Blacks and Television: A Comparison of the Portrayal of Black and White Characters on Television. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, 1983.

Miller, J.B. The Contruction of Anger in Women and Men. In Work in Progress, Wellesley College, Ma., 1983.

Novaco, R.W. Regulating interpersonal relationships: intervention strategies. In Final Report, Anger and Its Portrayals in the Media: Implications for Promotion of Mental Health, Consultation on Anger, Queenstown, Md., 1984.

Pearl, D., Bouthilet, L. and Lazar, J. (Eds.). Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties. Rockville, Md: Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Mental Health, 1982.

Pierce, C.M. Comments on anger portrayals. In Final Report, Anger and Its Portrayals in the Media: implications for Promotion of Mental Health, Consultation on Anger, Queenstown, Md., 1984.

Sparks, C. A different approach to anger. In Final Report, Anger and Its Portrayals in the Media: Implications for Promotion of Mental Health, Consultation on Anger, Queenstown, Md., 1984.

Spielberger, C. Assessment of anger and its role as a risk factor. In Final Report, Anger and Its Portrayals in the Media: Implications for Promotion of Mental Health, Consultation on Anger, Queenstown, Md., 1984.

Swift, C. Formulating messages for the media: a prevention perspective. In Final Report, Anger and Its Portrayals in the Media: Implications for Promotion of Mental Health, Consultation on Anger, Queenstown, Md., 1984.

Tavris, C. Formulating messages for the media. In Final Report, Anger and Its Portrayals in the Media: Implications for Promotion of Mental Health, Consultation on Anger, Queenstown, Md., 1984.

TABLE 1. PROGRAMS FROM WHICH EPISODES OF ANGER WERE VIEWED AND ANALYZED

Title of Program	Network	Production Company	Rank	Ratings	Homes Reached
Detective Stories:					
Simon and Simon	CBS	Universal Television	7	21.8	18,508 200
Remington Steele	NBC	MTM Enterprise	23	17.0	14,433,000
Cagney and Lacey	CBS	Orion Television	25	16.9	14,348,100
Hill Street Blues	NBC	MTM Productions	27	16.6	14.903.400
Harcast & McCorm	ABC	Cannel Productions	31	15.6	13 224.400
Miami Vice	NBC	Universal Television	37	14.4	12.225.400
Situation Comedies:					
The Cosby Show	NBC	Carsey-Werner Co.	3	24.2	20,545,800
Family Ties	NBC	Paramount Television	5	22.1	18,762,900
Newhart	CBS	MTM Productions	16	18.4	15,621,600
Webster	ABC	Paramount Television	24	18.1	15,370,000
Silver Spoons	NBC	Universal Television	71	10.3	8,744.700
Nightime Soaps:					
Dynasty	ABC	Aaron Spelling Pro.	1	25.0	21,225,000
Dallas	CBS	Lorimar Productions	2	24.7	20,970.300
Hotel	ABC	Aaron Spelling Pro.	12	19.7	16 725,300
Adventure story:					
The A-Team	NBC	Cannel Productions	6	21.9	18,593,100

TABLE #2

PROGRAM	NUMBERS REPRESENT THE PERCENTAGE OF EPISODES OF ANGER IN EACH ROW THAT THE ANGRY PERSON: SKILLS FOR MANAGING ANGER					
	ENGAGED IN PROBLEM SOLV.	FOUND HUMOR IN THE SITUATION	SHOWED RESPECT	USED SELF INSTRUCTION	MONITORED SOMATIC SYMPTOMS	GAVE COHORENT EXPLANATION
A Team	0	0	13	0	0	31
Cagney and Lacey	25	0	0	0	0	75
Cosby	8.3	67	75	0	0	82
Dallas	25	0	50	0	8.3	83
Dynasty	6.3	0	44	0	6.3	81.3
Family Ties	67	0	33	0	0	67
Hardcastle and McCormick	27	9	27	0	0	64
Hill Street Blues	13	0	35	0	0	71
Hotel	11	0	33	0	0	78
Miami Vice	43	0	14	0	0	71
Newhart	13	0	63	0	0	88
Remington Steele	0	0	30	0	0	20
Silver Spoons	25	0	50	0	0	75
Simon and Simon	10	0	40	0	0	60
Webster	0	0	100	13	13	75
TOTAL	12.0	5.5	39	.6	1.8	67

TABLE #3

SKILLS FOR MANAGING ANGER IN THE FAMILY

PROGRAM	NUMBERS REPRESENT THE PERCENTAGE OF EPISODES OF ANGER IN EACH ROW WHERE:	Parents Teach Anger Express.	Parents Share Feelings	Anger Directed at obj. or Behv. Rather than Person	Angry Person Separates Past from present Feelings	Integration of Love & Anger
A Team		0	0	19	25	6.25
Cagney and Lacey		0	0	38	75	0
Cosby		8.3	0	92	50	42
Dallas		0	0	50	50	17
Dynasty		0	0	44	25	31
Family Ties		0	33	100	0	100
Hardcastle and McCormick		0	0	55	45	18
Hill Street Blues		0	0	55	55	9.7
Hotel		0	0	22	44	11
Miami Vice		0	0	57	57	0
Newhart		0	0	100	38	38
Remington Steele		0	0	20	20	10
Silver Spoons		0	0	75	63	0
Simon and Simon		0	0	30	50	0
Webster		25	38	25	50	50
TOTAL		1.8	1.8	47.6	46	15

TABLE #4

COMMUNICATION WHILE ANGRY

PROGRAM	NUMBERS REPRESENT THE PERCENTAGE OF EPISODES OF ANGER IN EACH ROW THAT THE TARGET: Listens to Angry Person	Accurately Heard	Showed Respect	Used Humor to Calm Angry Person	Showed Empathy for Angry Person	Was Open to Other Person's Point of View
A Team	44	31	25	6.25	0	6.3
Cagney and Lacey	88	63	75	0	14	0
Cosby	100	92	100	33	25	75
Dallas	83	67	67	0	25	42
Dynasty	94	75	69	0	19	25
Family Ties	100	100	33	33	33	33
Hardcastle and McCormick	91	91	73	18	27	34
Hill Street Blues	87	84	80	0	33	39
Hotel	100	100	67	11	44	33
Miami Vice	43	43	29	0	14	43
Newhart	15	38	88	0	38	50
Remington Steele	30	20	60	0	20	20
Silver Spoons	100	88	63	0	13	38
Simon and Simon	89	90	60	10	10	60
Webster	100	75	100	13	33	63
TOTAL	81	91	68	6.11	23.5	37.4

TABLE #5

PROGRAM	NUMBERS REPRESENT PERCENTAGE OF EPISODES OF ANGER IN EACH ROW WHERE:	CHARACTERISTICS OF ANGRY PERSON				
	Sex is Male	Age is Adult	Race is White	The Character is Powerful	The Character is a Hero	The Character is Likeable
A Team	88	94	100	100	31	31
Cagney and Lacey	38	100	100	100	100	100
Cosby	67	100	0	67	100	100
Dallas	75	100	100	100	75	75
Dynasty	69	100	87.5	100	75	75
Family Ties	67	100	100	67	0	100
Hardcastle and McCormick	100	100	100	91	82	82
Hill Street Blues	77	100	87	87	65	61
Hotel	89	89	100	78	89	89
Miami Vice	100	100	100	86	100	86
Newhart	38	100	100	88	75	88
Remington Steele	50	100	100	80	40	40
Silver Spoons	75	25	100	50	75	75
Simon and Simon	80	100	100	100	60	60
Webster	75	63	63	75	100	100
TOTAL	74	93	84	87	33	71

TABLE #6

PROGRAM	NUMBERS REPRESENT PERCENTAGE OF EPISODES OF ANGER IN EACH ROW WHERE:	CHARACTERISTICS OF TARGET: Sex is Male	Age is Adult	Race is White	Character is Powerful	Character Appears Angry	Character is Likeable
A Team		94	100	100	88	44	63
Cagney and Lacey		75	100	100	88	13	63
Cosby		75	67	8.3	50	8.3	75
Dallas		67	100	100	83	17	58
Dynasty		38	100	100	81	44	75
Family Ties		100	100	100	67	100	100
Hardcastle and McCormick		100	100	100	55	45	55
Hill Street Blues		93	100	73	81	26	65
Hotel		44	100	100	67	33	78
Miami Vice		86	100	100	43	14	14
Newhart		38	100	100	63	13	50
Remington Steele		60	100	100	8.0	10	80
Silver Spoons		100	100	100	75	25	100
Simon and Simon		100	13	100	100	40	70
Webster		86	86	86	88	13	100
TOTAL		77	92.6	88	76	26	68

TABLE #7

PRECURSORS AND PREVENTION: SKILLS FOR ANGER MANAGEMENT

PROGRAM	NUMBERS REPRESENT PERCENTAGE OF EPTSODES OF ANGER IN EACH ROW WHERE:	Angry Person Provided w/info About Situa. Before Anger Escalated	Angry Person Subj. to Stress Prior to display of Anger	Angry Person Under Influen. of drugs or Alcohol	Angry Person Shows Somatic Symptoms	Actions or lack of Actions Resp. for Anger	Distraction or Pleasing message Provided
A Team		19	38	0	0	88	6.3
Cagney and Lacey		13	88	13	0	50	38
Cosby		67	42	0	8.3	83	67
Dallas		17	67	17	0	75	25
Dynasty		19	56.3	6.3	6.3	69	19
Family Ties		67	67	0	0	67	33
Hardcastle and McCormick		27	45	18	0	64	9
Hill Street Blues		10	81	6.5	0	60	13
Hotel		22	78	22	0	75	44
Miami Vice		14	29	0	0	57	0
Newhart		50	50	0	0	88	0
Remington Steele		20	20	0	0	50	20
Silver Spoons		13	50	0	0	100	13
Simon and Simon		30	20	0	0	70	10
Webster		50	50	0	0	100	63
TOTAL		23	54	6	1.2	72	23

TABLE #8

REACTIONS OF PRIME TIME TV CHARACTERS TO THEIR ANGER

PROGRAM	NUMBERS REPRESENT PERCENTAGE OF EPISODES OF ANGER IN EACH ROW THAT ANGRY PERSON:	WAS VERBALLY ABUSIVE	APPEARS TO BE VIOLENT	USED ANGER AS A DEFENSE	TAKES ANGER OUT ON SELF	FELT GUILTY AFTER ANGER WAS EXPRESSED	TAKES OUT ANGER ON INANIMATE OBJECTS
A Team		69	87	13	6	0	31
Cagney & Lacey		75	25	63	0	0	13
Cosby		8	0	8.3	8	0	13
Dallas		50	17	42	8	8.3	0
Dynasty		25	13	69	0	6.3	0
Family Ties		0	0	100	0	0	67
Hardcastle and McCormick		82	36	36	0	0	0
Hill Street Blues		48	39	42	3.3	17	5.2
Hotel		44	44	44	22	0	11
Miami Vice		86	57	43	14	0	0
Newhart		25	0	25	0	13	13
Remington Steel		70	30	20	0	0	10
Silver Spoons		0	0	0	0	0	0
Simon and Simon		40	50	30	0	0	0
Webster		0	13	63	0	0	13
TOTAL		45	32	35.6	4.3	4.9	6.1